

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE PARKS AND RECREATION
(518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

UNIQUE SITE NO.:

QUAD:

SERIES:

NEG. NO.:

YOUR NAME: Allison Rachleff

DATE: May 1, 1992

YOUR ADDRESS: 106 W. Sibley Hall, Ithaca, NY

TELEPHONE: (607)255-6851

ORGANIZATION (if any): Cornell University

IDENTIFICATION

- 1. BUILDING NAME(S):
- 2. COUNTY: Steuben TOWN/CITY: Corning VILLAGE:
- 3. STREET LOCATION: 9 West First Street
- 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public [] b. private [X]
- 5. PRESENT OWNER: Corning Comm. College, Dev. Fdn. ADDRESS: Corning Community College, Corning
- 6. USE: Original: Single Family Residence Present: Mixed use: 3 apartments, 1 office
- 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes [X] No []
Interior accessible: Yes [] No [X] Explain: Private residence

DESCRIPTION

- 8. BUILDING MATERIAL
 - a. clapboard [] b. stone [] c. brick [] d. board & batten []
 - e. cobblestone [] f. shingles [X] g. stucco [] other:
- 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:
 - a. wood frame with interlocking joints []
 - b. wood frame with light members [X]
 - c. masonry load bearing walls []
 - d. metal (explain)
 - e. other
- 10. CONDITION:
 - a. excellent [] b. good [X] c. fair [] d. deteriorated []
- 11. INTEGRITY:
 - a. original site [X] b. moved [] if so, when?
 - c. list major alterations and dates (if known): See Continuation Sheet
- 12. PHOTO:
- 13. MAP:

14. THREATS TO BUILDING:

- a. none known [] b. zoning [] c. roads []
- d. developers [X] e. deterioration []
- f. other:

15. RELATED OUT BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:

- a. barn [] b. carriage house [] c. garage []
- d. privy [] e. shed [] f. greenhouse []
- g. shop [] h. gardens []
- i. landscape features:
- j. other: Parking lot north of structure

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (CHECK MORE THAN ONE IF NECESSARY)

- a. open land [] b. woodland []
- c. scattered buildings []
- d. densely built-up [X] e. commercial [X]
- f. industrial [] g. residential [X]
- h. other:

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDINGS AND SURROUNDINGS:

(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

See Continuation Sheet

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE:

(Including interior features if known):

See Continuation Sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: ca. 1855

ARCHITECT:

BUILDER:

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

See Continuation Sheet

21. SOURCES:

See Continuation Sheet

22. THEME:

- 11c. MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND DATES

- 17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:
See Continuation sheet.

- 18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE
See Continuation sheet.

- 20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE
See Continuation Sheet.

- 21. SOURCES

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9 West First Street
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11c. INTEGRITY:

9 West First Street has been the subject of numerous building campaigns as the structure extends far back into the lot. The roof and the building are clad in asphalt and wood shingles and are not representative of the original building material.

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:

9 West First Street is situated on the north side of West First Street within a row of residential structures. Set back roughly ten feet from the thoroughfare, the house is closely related to its eastern neighbor, the Queen Anne-style cottage. At the turn of the century, the owner of 9 West First Street erected 7 West First Street as his office. Although these two structures are being evaluated separately, they are interrelated. 9 West First Street blends well with its surrounding neighbors which are predominantly classical in style. While its west facade faces a vacant lot, its north facade faces a parking lot. Because it is located in a mixed use residential and commercial district, traffic is heavy during the business day. Nevertheless, the house faces a public park which contributes to a sense of openness.

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE:

9 West First Street is a two-story mixed use structure containing an office and three apartments. The structure displays elements common to the Greek Revival Style. Predominant in New York between 1820-1860, McAlester's *Field Guide to American Houses* notes that the Greek Revival style is characterized by a gable roof of low pitch, emphasized by a cornice line with return trim in the gable end. Moreover, the principal entry may often be flanked by sidelights. 9 West First Street can be broken down into three distinct gabled parts. While the gable end runs perpendicular to the road in the first and third parts, the center section sandwiched between these structures is situated parallel to the road.

The north or principal facade is three bays wide. The second story contains three six-over-six double-hung sash, set beneath the cornice line of the gable, between the returns. The first story contains two six-over-six double-hung sash windows placed directly under the windows above. The third bay is delineated by the main entry which contains sidelights set on paneled bases. The entire unit is crowned by a pediment, balanced above the entry, and somewhat obscured by an aluminum awning.

The middle portion has a single gable on the west facade, adorned with returns. This facade also contains an irregular fenestration pattern. The second story contains a single one-over-one sash window which appears to be the only original fenestration on this portion of the building.

The third portion of the building also contains an irregular fenestration pattern with few original windows. However, the rear (north) facade contains a paired window on the second story and cutaway bay on the first, reminiscent of the Queen Anne Style. Its gable end is adorned with cornice returns as well. A single interior chimney with a corbeled cap is evident and indicates that this may have been an earlier portion of the building. In addition, the house sits on a stone foundation which has been covered with cement. While the house is sheathed in wood shingles, the roof is composed of asphalt shingles.

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18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (con't):

The odd configuration of 9 West First Street is best illuminated through an examination of the pertinent atlases and maps. An 1857 atlas of Corning indicates that a single portion of the house was present on the lot. This portion was set back, with its gable end parallel to the road. By 1893, a Sanborn map indicates that the center portion with the projecting gable end on the west facade was constructed in addition to a front porch and side entry. A livery stable was also situated on the northernmost portion of this lot adjacent to the alley. In 1903, a verandah which wrapped around the south and east facade was attached to the structure perhaps as a complement to new office with the full story porch which had recently been constructed at 7 West First Street. This configuration remained constant until 1943 when the verandah was removed and northernmost structure was appended to the rear of the building. Between 1930-1943, the outbuilding belonging to 9 West First Street was demolished, leaving a vacant lot in its place.

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

7-9 West First Street is architecturally and historically significant as an example of the role professionals played in the development of Corning's Southside neighborhood. By the turn of the century, First Street had been established as a prominent residential avenue. Nevertheless, the emergence of ecclesiastical and public buildings along First Street encouraged additional commercial development in this area. For example, in 1867, the Presbyterians built a stone Gothic Revival-style church on the northeast corner of Pine and First Streets. In 1886, the Baptists relocated to a brick and stone church on the corner of Wall and First streets. In 1894, the Methodists erected a Romanesque Revival-style church on the corner of Ceder and First Streets. In 1897, the City Club was built on the northwest corner of Pine and First streets and by 1904, the Steuben County Courthouse was erected in Courthouse Park, near the southwest corner of Pine and First streets. Thus, by the late nineteenth century, the architecture on First Street was richly diversified with public edifices juxtaposed near private residences.

7-9 West First Street is situated on the southern half of lot 15 in Block 65 as determined by the Corning Company in their 1835 plan for the village. In 1853, Franklin Pero purchased this lot from Erastus Corning's land company. Because heavy commercial development had already been occurring to the north, Pero was assured of a owning a

desirable plot of land, close to the locus of activity in this burgeoning village. According to an 1857 atlas of Steuben County published by J.E. Gillette, the residence at 9 West First Street had been built and sat on its spacious lot, surrounded by new structures to its north, south, east and west.

By 1893, First Street was more densely developed as indicated by the numerous Sanborn maps from the period. That same year, City Engineer Harry C. Heermans produced a map of the young city reflecting detailed documentation of all properties, including lot boundaries, footprints and ownership of structures. By this time, the home on lot 15 was in the possession of Dr. Henry A. Argue, one of Corning's most prominent surgeons. It is difficult to determine whether Argue was responsible for the additions to 9 West First Street between 1857-1893 as city directories from the late 1860s and early 1870s do not include him within their annals. However, by the year Heermans' map was produced, the city directory lists Argue with his office located in the heart of the business district on East Market Street while he resided as a boarder at 171 East First Street.

Between 1898-1903, the Sanborn maps indicate that 7 West First Street had been erected. This Queen Anne-style structure was listed as a one-and-a-half story office, which

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20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE (con't.):

points to the probability that Argue had established his practice at this site. The 1903 directory confirms this fact by listing Argue as a physician and surgeon located at 7-9 West First Street. By 1905, Argue had gone into practice with a Dr. Foley, forming the office of Argue & Foley, physicians, at 7 West First Street.

The establishment of Argue's practice is notable in the history of the Southside neighborhood. In 1893, the Corning Hospital had been organized and, by 1900, the Stearns family offered the hospital their no longer extant home at 159 East First Street. In 1902, this home was donated to the association by local businessman Franklin Kingsbury, and by 1905, a neo-Georgian building was erected adjacent to the space, to provide the hospital with a larger service capacity. Argue's arrival in the neighborhood coincides with this development which in turn initiated a long tradition of medical offices being located in the First Street area.

An 1896 biographical sketch of Argue reveals he was a well-trained professional. Born in Corning in 1861, Argue studied for two years at McGill University in Montreal. In 1881, he graduated from New York Medical University and established his practice in Corning. As a physician, Argue was affiliated with the Steuben County Medical Society, the Corning Academy of Medicine and the State and National Association of Railway Surgeons. It appears from this data that Argue was also the chief surgeon for the Erie Railroad. Although Corning had been just a stop along its route since 1849, it is notable that Argue was associated with the railroad, and probably indicates why he chose to locate his practice just north of its tracks.

7-9 West First Street should be recognized as a locally significant example of the different phases of development which occurred along First Street during the nineteenth century. While 9 West First Street represents the early homes built in the Greek Revival style during the 1850s, 7 West First Street reflects the influence the Queen Anne style had on smaller structures. When Henry Argue built his office adjacent his home in ca.1898, he

created an interesting architectural composition which speaks to the diversity of building styles scattered throughout Corning's Southside. The legacy he left behind at 7-9 West First Street should stay in tact as a testament to the craftsmanship of local builders and the importance of Argue's role as one of Corning's leading physicians.

21. SOURCES:

Atlas of Steuben County, New York. M. Levy. Philadelphia: J.E. Gillette, publisher, 1857.

Auwaeter, John. Reconnaissance Level Survey of Southside Neighborhood Proposed Historic District: Phase II: Historic Overview. Corning: Southside Neighborhood Association: 1991.

Corning City and Painted Post Directories:

M.P. Goodhue: 1909-10

Hanford's: 1893, 1903

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20. SOURCES (con't.):

Gottfried, Herbert & Jan Jennings. American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Map of City of Corning. Corning: Harry C. Heermans, City Engineer, 1893.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Hakes, Harlo, ed. Landmarks of Steuben County, New York. Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1896.

Sanborn Map Company. Maps of Corning, New York.

↖ 9 West First Street ↗

